

# Barron's, Dorsett's, James' and Shelton's

## How I Connect To the James Family of America

Betty Dorsett Duke © February 19, 2014

For as long as I can remember I've heard old family stories that claim my paternal great-grandfather, known as James L. Courtney in Texas, was really Jesse Woodson James. I've dedicated the past two decades to determining the truth of the matter. The findings of my research, as well as the research of many others, resulted in convincing me that the old family stories are true – Jesse James lived in Texas from 1871 until his death in 1943 under the alias of James L. Courtney. Y-DNA testing is the final step of my investigation and is currently underway. From this point forward I'll refer to James L. Courtney as the real James L. Courtney in order for the reader to differentiate him from Jesse James.

Jesse James was the son of Robert Sallee James and Zerelda Elizabeth Cole. The real James L. Courtney was the son of Stephen Courtney and Dianah Andruss. Jesse James and the real James L. Courtney were cousins - both of them descended from Sarah E. Mason Barbee James.<sup>1</sup> Jesse James was the third great-grandson of Sarah Elizabeth Mason Barbee and Thomas James (her second husband), and James L Courtney was the fourth great-grandson of Sarah Elizabeth Mason Barbee and Andrew Barbee (her first husband).

Sarah Elizabeth Mason, daughter of George Mason and Mary French, married Andrew Barbee first and after he died she married Thomas James, “son of John James, Sr. (born between 1623 and 1652 at Caernarvon, Wales, settled probably in Northhampton Co. Virginia) and unknown mother.”<sup>i</sup>

No one seems to know exactly how many children Thomas and Sarah James had but one source reports that they had four sons (see below).<sup>ii</sup> Some refer to this family as the founders of the James family of America.

1. George James (married Mary Wheeler).
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2. William James (married Margaret Unknown).
3. John James (married Dinah Allen).
4. Joseph James (married Mary Field born 1724).

Due to charges that Stephen Courtney was disloyal to the Union due to consorting with William Clarke Quantrill (Confederate guerilla leader) during the Civil War, his son, the real James L. Courtney (along with his parents and siblings) assumed an alias.<sup>iii</sup> Every one of them with the exception of Stephen Courtney and his married daughter, Harriet Courtney Black, kept their given names and changed their surnames from Courtney to Haun.<sup>iv</sup> Stephen Courtney changed his full name to Andrew Jackson Haun and left Missouri for Kansas, and Harriet Courtney Black had no need to change her surname because she became Harriet Black when she married. After the real James L. Courtney became known as James Haun, Jesse James became known as James L. Courtney.

No wonder Jesse James AKA James L. Courtney wrote the following rhyme in his 1871 diary (which he signed “J. James” and “James L. Courtney”): “When stemm and tryst James L. Courtney is my heist”.<sup>v</sup> He was telling future readers of his personal diary that he took the name of his cousin, James L. Courtney.

Jesse James served the Confederacy under William “Bill” Anderson, William Clarke Quantrill’s lieutenant. I believe the charges against Stephen Courtney for consorting with Quantrill were true. This would explain why he signed the papers for his underage son, the real James L. Courtney, to join the Union Army. I also believe this is why he and his family assumed the surname alias of Haun and left Missouri for Kansas. After the war was over I believe Stephen Courtney AKA Andrew Jackson Haun and his wife provided a hideout for the James Gang at their Kansas farm.

Here’s how my family connects to the James family of America:

The real James L. Courtney’s great-great-grandfather, William Francis Courtney, married Mary Barbee, granddaughter of Andrew Barbee and Sarah Elizabeth Mason, daughter of George Mason I. Again, after Andrew Barbee’s death Sarah Elizabeth Mason Barbee married Thomas James. Jesse James’ direct ancestor.

The Barbee’s of Clay County, Missouri were also related to Jesse James. They also connect to the real James L. Courtney’s family in Clay County, Missouri through Charles Mortimer Barbee, born 13 Nov 1817 in Georgetown, Kentucky and died 5 Feb 1896 in Liberty, Clay County, Missouri. Charles married Mary Jane Estes on 24 Nov 1857 in Liberty, Missouri.

This information places the Barbee family living in Clay County, Missouri as of 1857, seven years after Robert Sallee James left for California. Zerelda would have already been married to Reuben Samuel.

Charles Mortimer Barbee is the son of Nathaniel Barbee and Catherine Bradford. Nathaniel Barbee was the son of Joseph Barbee and Nancy Ann Withers. Joseph Barbee was the son of Andrew Barbee and Jane Delaney (Jesse James AKA James Courtney mentions Delaney's in his diary).

Andrew Barbee was the son of Thomas Barbee and Margaret Williams and brother of Mary Barbee who married William F. Courtney. Thomas Barbee was the son of Andrew Barbee and Sarah Elizabeth Mason.

Sarah Elizabeth Mason Barbee James and Mary Jane Shelton (wife of Thomas Hudson Barron) are my direct ancestors. (The Shelton surname is sometimes spelled as Chilton.)

My Shelton line connects to the James family of America through Thomas James and Sarah Mason Barbee James' son, Joseph James.

Joseph James was born in 1712 in Culpeper County, Virginia. He married Mary Field (born 1724), daughter of Henry Field and Ester James.

Joseph James and Mary Field were the parents of Joseph James who married Elizabeth Lightfoot.

Joseph James and Elizabeth Lightfoot were the parents of John Lightfoot James who married Margaret T. "Peggy" Brown.

John Lightfoot James and Margaret T. "Peggy" Brown were the parents of Daniel F. James (born 1822) who married Mildred Chilton/Shelton, daughter of Thomas Chilton/Shelton and Mildred Zimmerman.

Thomas Chilton/Shelton and Mildred Zimmerman are the parents of Medley Chilton/Shelton who married first to Ann Lake, second to Catherine Brown and third to Martha James.

Medley Chilton/Shelton and Martha James connect my family to the James family of America through Thomas James and Sarah Elizabeth Mason Barbee James' son, Joseph James.<sup>vi</sup>

The following excerpt explains my Barron connection to the James Family of America. (Details are included in my second book, *The Truth About Jesse James, 2007*):

William Hendley Barron was the son of Hendley Barron and Margery Cox. It is known that the Cox's of Falls County, Texas and the Barron's of Falls County, Texas are connected. William Hendley Barron and Leanah Mason are the parents of Thomas Mason Barron. Thomas Mason Barron married Penelope McFarland and became the parents of William Thomas Barron and Sarah Field. From this union would come another Thomas Mason Barron who was born in 1888 and married Mary Mulligan. Thomas Mason Barron and Mary Mulligan are the parents of Mary Adelaide Barron who married Conrad Nicholson Hilton, founder of the Hilton Hotel Chain.<sup>vii</sup> Paris Hilton, through her paternal great-grandmother, Mary Adelaide Barron, is the

fifth cousin four times removed from Jesse and Frank James - America's most famous outlaws. Mary Adelaide Barron definitely has ties to the Barron - Mason family in which Sarah Elizabeth Mason is the main seed of the Courtney, Shelton and James family trees...and now the Barron family tree as well.

Thomas Hudson Barron's family was living in Hardin County, Kentucky by 1820. He was the son of Susan (Mattingly) and John M. Barron, and was born 8 March 1796, in Virginia. The Mattingly and Barron families were from Charles County, Maryland and connect to the same line as that of William Hendley Barron (see pedigree at the end of this article).

Some believe the Hilton-Barron line verifies my family story that Jesse James was known as James L. Courtney in Texas. Outlaws are said to have chosen their aliases from people they knew well. The real James L. Courtney, Thomas Hudson Barron and his wife, Mary Jane Shelton, linked to Jesse Woodson James of Clay County, Missouri. According to Maryland genealogical records the Thomas Hudson Barron family and the Charles County, Maryland Barron family are all from the same branch. Names such as Ignatius Wheeler, Thomas Jenkins, William Key, Edmund Bull, Dent, Swann, Dorsett and Graves gave good leads into this Barron, Courtney family tree.

All of the above connections are through Jesse W. Dorsett's (my father) side of the family. Giles Brent is my direct ancestor through my Dorsett line.<sup>viii</sup> Giles' nephew, George Brent, was the great-great-grandfather of Sarah Brent, the second wife of George Mason IV of Gunston Hall.

"George Mason IV was an American Patriot, statesman and a delegate from Virginia to the U.S. Constitutional Convention. He is considered as one of the "Founding Fathers" of the United States as he is called the "Father of the United States Bill of Rights" along with James Madison. The Bills Of Rights were based on the earlier Virginia Declaration of Rights, which Mason had drafted in 1776."<sup>ix</sup>

Knowing that my connections to the James family of America are through my father's side of the family I was totally surprised when Laura Anderson Way, a great genealogist, also found connections through my mother's side of the family to a number of Quantrill's Partisan Rangers, commonly referred to as guerillas. My mother was Adeline Fay "Dorothy" Burt Dorsett and I don't think she was aware of these connections. Jesse James was one of Quantrill's guerillas, and many of these men were related either by blood or by marriage. ([http://jessewjames.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/quantrill\\_guerrillas\\_in\\_my\\_family\\_tree1.pdf](http://jessewjames.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/quantrill_guerrillas_in_my_family_tree1.pdf)).

Four of my family lines connect to the James family of America family - the Barron's, Dorsett's, James' and Shelton's, and all of them link to the noted Mason family. Even the man whose name was "heisted" by Jesse James, the real James L. Courtney, connected to them.

I've often questioned how my Great-Grandfather Jesse Woodson James AKA James L. Courtney knew Thomas Hudson Barron before he arrived at his (Barron's) Blevins, Texas ranch in 1871. The fact that they knew each other was obvious due to Jesse's 1871 diary – Barron met Jesse near Stephenville, Texas and they traveled together back to his (Barron's) ranch. Jesse's diary also made it obvious that when he left Missouri he had a planned destination in mind – Thomas Hudson Barron's ranch. Now I know the answer to my question - I never dreamed genealogy would provide it. The genealogical and photographic evidence I've presented over the years leaves little doubt that Jesse James did assume the alias of James L. Courtney, got away with his own 1882 murder, married Mary Ellen Barron (Thomas Hudson Barron's daughter) and became my great-grandfather.

To see some of the photographic evidence I've presented visit my website at <http://www.jessejamesintexas.com/>.

## Pedigrees:

### *The PEDIGREE of* **George MASON**

1) **Born: 1629 Died: 1686**

*Lady Diana's Second Cousin 10x removed and **fourth great-grandfather of Thomas Mason Barron and Jesse Woodson James.***

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Wife/Partner: Mary FRENCH  
Children: George MASON ; Sarah E. MASON

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    /-- Thomas MASON (1602? - 1655)
    /
- George MASON
  \   /-- George FRENCH (? - 1647)
  \-- Ann FRENCH (1610? - 1673)
      \
        /-- poss. (ANN) GREY + &&&> [255 ,N,T,&]
        |
        | / (skip this generation!)
        | /-- Edmund (Sir; of Chillingham) GREY (? - 1531)
        | /-- Ralph (Sir; of Chillingham) GREY
        |
        | \-- Anne (of Stainsby) GOWER + ==&=> [255 ,WHa,Rv,&]
        | /
        | | or: poss. Elizabeth CLIFFORD
        | /-- Edward (Sir; of Howick) GREY
  
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|      |      \      /-- Thomas (Sir; of Horton) GREY + &&&> [
|      |      \-- Isabel (of Horton) GREY (? - by 1582) 255 ,E,T,&]
|      /      \-- Dorothy OGLE + &&&> [
|-- Cecily GREY (? - 1605) 255 ,E,T,&]
|      \      /-- Thomas (Sir; of Hunstanton) le ==&=> [
|      |      \-- STRANGE + 255 ,WHa,Rv,&]
|      |      /-- Roger (of Wiveton Hall) le STRANGE
|      |      \ | OR: prob. not Roger STRANGE + &&&> [
|      |      | 255 ,E,T,&]
|      /      \-- Anne VAUX + &&&> [
|-- Catherine le STRANGE 255 ,E,T,&]
|      \      /-- Christopher HEYDON + &&&> [
|      |      /-- poss. Christopher HEYDON (1516? - 1579) 255 ,N,T,&]
|      |      /      \-- Ann HEVERINGHAM + =====> [ 1]
|-- Ann HEYDON (? - 1510)
|      \      /-- William (Knight; of Hawsted)
|      |      \-- DRURY + &&&> [ 255 ,N,&]
|      |      \-- poss. Anne DRURY (1523 - 1561)
|      |      \-- Elizabeth SOTHILL + &&&> [
|      |      | 255 ,Es,T,&]

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His 4-Great Grandchildren: Thomas Mason BARRON ; Jesse Woodson JAMES

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Source: <http://fabpedigree.com/s016/f657252.htm> at Jamie Allen's Family Tree & Ancient Genealogical Allegations.

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*The PEDIGREE of*  
**Thomas Mason BARRON**

2) **Born: Washington, D.C. 1818 Died: 1866 Kentucky**

*Male.*

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Wife/Partner: **Penelope Morton McFARLAND**

Child: **William T. [Barron]** (m. Sarah Field : great-grandfather of Nicky Hilton : 3-g  
grandfather of Paris Hilton)

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      /-- John BARRON (1664? - 1719 Maryland)
    /-- Thomas BARRON
  /      \-- Mary
 /-- Thomas BARRON (Maryland ? - 1805 Maryland)
/      \-- Priscilla COOKSEY + &&&> [ 255 ,N,T,&]
|-- Hendley BARRON (Maryland ? - 1824 Virg.)
|      \-- Robert Hendley COURTS + &&&> [ 255 ,E,T,&]
|      \-- Margaret COURTS
|      \-- Rebecca BURCH + &&&> [ 255 ,N,T,&]
|-- William Hendley BARRON (Kentucky 1793 - 1827)
/      \-- Margery COX (Maryland 1760? - 1847)
- Thomas Mason BARRON
  \      /-- George MASON + &&&> [ 255 ,Es,T,&]
  |      /-- George (Col.) MASON (1690? - 1735)
  |      /      \-- Mary FOWKE + ==&=> [
  |              255 ,nWH,RTX,&]
  |      /-- George MASON (Virg. 1725 - 1792 Virg.)
  |      /      \-- Ann THOMPSON + ===> [ 2]
  |-- Thomas MASON (Virginia 1770 - 1806? Virg.)
  |      \-- William EILBECK
  |      \-- Ann EILBECK (1734 - 1773)
  |      \-- Sarah EDGAR
  |-- Leannah MASON (1798 - 1824)
  |      /-- John HOOE + ===> [
  |              255 ,wha,rv,&]
  |      /-- Gerard HOOE (1733 - 1785)
  |      /      \-- Anne Fowke ALEXANDER + ===> [ 1]
  |-- Sarah Barnes HOOE (1769 - 1800)
  |      /-- Richard BARNES
  |      \-- Sarah BARNES (1742 - 1785)
  |      \      /-- William MANLEY + ===> [ 1]
  |              \-- Penelope MANLEY (? - 1768)
  |              \-- Penelope HIGGINS

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Source: <http://fabpedigree.com/s056/f010269.htm> at Jamie Allen's Family Tree  
& Ancient Genealogical Allegations.

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## The PEDIGREE of Jesse Woodson JAMES

(famous outlaw)

3) Born: Missouri 5 Sep 1847 Died: 3 Apr 1882 St. Joseph, Mo k. by Robert Ford

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**Wife/Partner: Zerelda Amanda Mimms** [Note from Betty Dorsett Duke: In 1871 Jesse James married Mary Ellen Barron, daughter of Thomas Hudson Barron. I don't believe Jesse James ever married Zerelda "Zee" Mimms (his first cousin) or fathered her children. Legitimate DNA testing will eventually determine the truth of this matter.]

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/      -- Thomas JAMES (Virg. 1674? - 1720?)
/      -- John JAMES (Virg. 1709 - 1778)
/      \      -- Sarah E. MASON +          &&&> [
255 ,Es,T,&]
/      -- William JAMES
/      \      -- Dinah ALLEN +          =====> [ 7]
/      -- John M. JAMES (1775 - 1827)
/      \      -- Mary HINES (1755 - 1774)
/      -- Robert Sallee (Rev.) JAMES (1818 - 1850)
/      \      -- Abraham POOR +          =====> [ 3]
/      \      -- Robert Cornet POOR (1763 - 1801)
/      \      -- Judith GARDNER (1726? - 1822)
/      \      -- Mary (Polly) POOR (1790 - 1827)
/      \      -- Shadrock MIMS +          =====> [ 3]
/      \      -- Elizabeth Woodson MIMS (1769 - 1823)
/      \      -- Elizabeth WOODSON +          ==&=> [
255 ,nHG,R,&]
- Jesse Woodson JAMES
\      /      -- John COLE +          =====> [ 5]
\      /      -- Richard (Sr.) COLE (Ky 1729 - 1814)
\      /      \      -- Susanna
\      /      -- Richard (Jr.) COLE (Ky 1763 - 1839)
\      /      \      -- Ann HUBBARD +          =====> [ 1]
\      /      -- James COLE (Ky 1804 - ?)
\      /      \      -- Sally YATES (1765 - 1836)
\      -- Zerelda Elizabeth COLE
\      \      /      -- Anthony (Sr.) LINDSAY
\      \      /      -- Anthony (Jr.) LINDSAY
\      \      /      \      -- Rachel Ann DORSEY +          &&&> [
255 ,eNs,T,&]
\      \      -- Sallie LINDSAY (1803 - 1861)
\      \      /      -- Richard (Sr.) COLE +          =====> [ 6]
\      \      -- Alice COLE (1769 - 1818)
\      \      -- Emsey Margaret JAMES
| or: Ann HUBBARD, q.v.

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Source: Ibid. <http://fabpedigree.com/s058/f010269.htm>

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<sup>i</sup> Gunston Hall Plantation: Descendants of George Mason, 1629-1686:

<http://look.net/gunstonhall/masonweb/p1.htm>

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iii</sup> <http://dlxs2.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pagevieweridx?>

[c=moawar;cc=moawar;q1=Ben%20Loan;rgn=full%20text;idno=waro0032;idno=waro0032;view=image;seq=858;page=root;size=s;frm=frameset](http://dlxs2.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pagevieweridx?c=moawar;cc=moawar;q1=Ben%20Loan;rgn=full%20text;idno=waro0032;idno=waro0032;view=image;seq=858;page=root;size=s;frm=frameset)

[Courtesy of Gayla McDowell.](http://dlxs2.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pagevieweridx?c=moawar;cc=moawar;q1=Ben%20Loan;rgn=full%20text;idno=waro0032;idno=waro0032;view=image;seq=858;page=root;size=s;frm=frameset)

[cxv James Family Genealogy Forum: http://genforum.genealogy.com](http://genforum.genealogy.com)

<sup>iv</sup> This is explained in detail in this author's second book, *The Truth About Jesse James*, 2007.

<sup>v</sup> The definition of stemm is a line of descent, and the definition of tryst is a secret prearranged meeting place. The "y" in tryst is pronounced as "I" in this rhyme.

<sup>vi</sup> James Family Genealogy Forum: John Thomas Shelton (Parents: Medley Shelton & Martha James):

<http://genforum.genealogy.com/james/messages/36927.html>

<sup>vii</sup> Jesse James' half-sister was Sarah Louisa Samuel. It's interesting to note that he married William Nicholson.

Their son, Arch Nicholson, identified my paternal great-grandparents as Jesse James and Mrs. Jesse James in a photo I refer to as the eBay photo of the James family or The Smoking Gun. To view the front and back of this photo click here:

<http://www.jessejamesintexas.com/uploads/3/0/4/7/3047663/27479.png>;

<http://www.jessejamesintexas.com/uploads/3/0/4/7/3047663/1487824.png>;

<http://www.jessejamesintexas.com/uploads/3/0/4/7/3047663/5733432.png>

<sup>viii</sup> Exploring Maryland's Roots: Library: Giles Brent (1600-1672):

<http://mdroots.thinkport.org/library/gilesbrent.asp>

<sup>ix</sup> Family Tree Tuesday – George Mason IV

Posted December 11, 2012 by Hiromimarie:

<http://www.geni.com/blog/family-tree-tuesday-george-mason-iv-378683.html>

Other sources:

Mercer Library Harrisburg, KY;

The James Family Bible;

Barbee's Crossroads – Andrew Barbee Line: <http://members.aol.com/BarbeeJK/Andrew.html>;

Ancestry.com's "Find Famous Relatives" beta search, based on Paris Hilton's family tree through her paternal great-grandmother;

Maryland Genealogical Society Bulletin, Winter 1984 Vol. 25 No 2; Charles County, MD: Probate Records and Inventories Part I 1673-1753;

Charles County Maryland Probate Records, Inventories, Book 1717-1735; and

Gunston Hall – Home of George Mason: [http://gunstonhall.org/georgemason/mason\\_family/sarah\\_brent.html](http://gunstonhall.org/georgemason/mason_family/sarah_brent.html).